

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 10 and 17-22 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1, 12, 13 and 16 as indicated below, wherein any additions to the amended claims are underlined and any deletions to the amended claims are presented either within double brackets or as struckthrough text.

Please add new claims 23-31 as indicated below.

1. (Currently Amended) A tip tool for connecting or disconnecting ~~[[a]]~~ an optical tip to an imaging apparatus, comprising:

a tip tool body sized to fit over at least a portion of the optical tip; and
a tip holding element disposed in contact with the tip tool body for releasably engaging the optical tip.

2. (Original) The tip tool of claim 1, wherein the tip holding element is disposed within the tip tool body.

3. (Original) The tip tool of claim 1, wherein the tip holding element comprises an O-ring.

4. (Original) The tip tool of claim 3, wherein the O-ring is comprised of a polymer.

5. (Original) The tip tool of claim 4, wherein the polymer is buna-n.
6. (Original) The tip tool of claim 1, wherein the tip holding element comprises at least one compressible element.
7. (Original) The tip tool of claim 6, wherein the at least one compressible element comprises at least one arm cantilevered from the tip tool body.
8. (Original) The tip tool of claim 6, wherein the at least one compressible element comprises an O-ring.
9. (Original) The tip tool of claim 1, wherein the tip tool body is comprised of a polymer.
10. (Canceled)
11. (Original) The tip tool of claim 7, wherein the at least one arm is comprised of the same material as the tip tool body.
12. (Currently Amended) The tip tool of claim 1, further comprising a depth set mechanism sized to select the extent to which the tip tool body is fitted over the at least a portion of the optical tip.

13. (Currently Amended) The tip tool of claim 1, wherein the tip tool is capable of storing the optical tip when the optical tip is not connected to the imaging apparatus.

14. (Original) The tip tool of claim 1, further comprising identifying indicia disposed at a visible location on the tip tool body.

15. (Original) A tool for connecting or disconnecting an optical tip to one of a borescope or endoscope, comprising:

a cylindrical, hollow body sized to fit over the optical tip;

an O-ring disposed within the body; and

at least one compressible arm cantilevered from the body,

wherein the at least one compressible arm is located over the O-ring so that when compressed the arm compresses the O-ring.

16. (Currently Amended) The tool of claim 15, wherein the O-ring is made from buna-n, and the body and each of the at least one compressible arm ~~are each~~ is made from ~~Delrin®~~ a polymer.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (New) A tip tool for connecting or disconnecting a tip to an imaging apparatus, comprising:

a tip tool body sized to fit over at least a portion of the tip;

a tip holding element comprising at least one compressible arm cantilevered from the tip tool body for releasably engaging the tip.

24. (New) The tool of claim 23, wherein the at least one arm is comprised of the same material as the tip tool body.

25. (New) An endoscope apparatus comprising:
- a hand piece;
 - an insertion tube connected to the hand piece, said insertion tube having a distal end;
 - an endoscope tip removably connected to the distal end of the insertion tube, said endoscope tip having an outer surface and further including at least one optical imaging component;
 - a tip tool having a tip tool body, wherein the tip tool body includes an opening to receive said endoscope tip; and
 - means associated with the tip tool to engage the endoscope tip in order to remove the endoscope tip from the distal end of the insertion tube.
26. (New) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said opening of the tip tool is at least partially cylindrical to receive an outer cylindrical surface of the endoscope tip.
27. (New) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said means associated with the tip tool is an O ring located inside the tip tool.
28. (New) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said means associated with the tip tool is a compressible cantilevered arm.
29. (New) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said endoscope tip is attached to the insertion tube via a threaded connection.

30. (New) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the hand piece includes means to articulate said distal end.

31. (New) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the endoscope tip includes illumination means.